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whole Earth newsletter

JUNE 1991 Vol. XXI, No. 1

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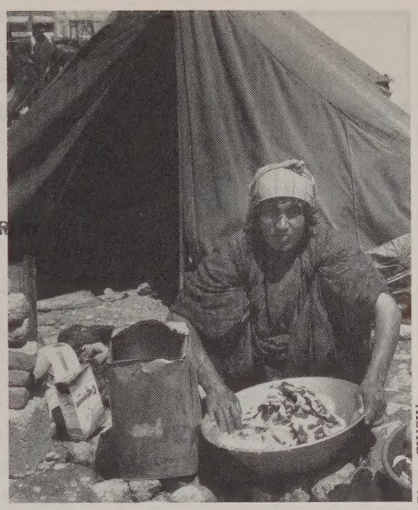

Photo CWSW

Kurdish refugee woman in Iran

Peacock and Provance Join UCBWM Staff

At their May meeting, the UCBWM Board of Directors elected Susan Peacock as Secretary for Global Education and Advocacy and the Rev. Terry Provance as Secretary for World Ministries in the U.S. They will begin their work September 1.

Susan Peacock comes to her position after four years as a UCBWM missionary in Cuernavaca, Mexico, where she has been co-coordinator for semester programs and travel seminars for the Center for Global Education of Augsburg College. She has also served as international human rights intern with the Washington Office on Latin America in Washington, D.C., and as Central America Education and Advocacy Intern for the Latin America/Caribbean Office of the UCBWM. She has a master's degree in International Administration from the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont.

Interrelated global concerns are part of the mission agenda for the whole church with specific implications for the UCBWM. The objectives for the Office for Global Education and Advocacy include "working to provide information and understanding for advocating United States and international political, social, economic and ecological policies which will contribute to a just peace for all people."

"Jesus challenged the people of his time to look at the world through new eyes, to think critically," Susan said in her remarks to the Board of Directors. "The world is interdependent and complex and full of many terrible injustices," she added. "Too often we think that we know the truth but really only know a piece of the truth. In order to put the pieces together, to discern truth in its wholeness, we must talk to each other and share with each other. Then we'll begin to see the world with new eyes." Education, Susan said, "should be a transformative process which encourages people to share their pieces of the truth, a process which moves people of faith to act concretely on their concerns, a process which empowers people to seek to change unjust policies."

". . . to discern truth in its wholeness, we must talk to each other and share with each other."

Over the past several years the UCBWM has been developing a new program thrust, "World Ministries in the U.S.," which Terry Provance will now head. The program seeks to engage the whole United Church of Christ (USA) in world ministries by helping congregations, Associations, Conferences, the General Synod and other instrumentalities of the General Synod to experience their lives in worship, faith, witness and service as part of the global church.

Terry Provance has been serving St. Peter's UCC in Pittsburgh since 1987, when he received his Master of Divinity degree from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. He also has a Master of Arts degree from Pacific School of Religion. Terry's international experience dates back to his high school years when he served as chair of the American Field Service Committee for two years. He

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THE CHURCH RESPONDS TO THE GULF CRISIS

Gabriel Habib, General Secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), recently thanked CWSW (Church World Service and Witness, the development, refugee and relief arm of the National Council of Churches) for its "continuing humanitarian assistance to the war's victims." Mr. Habib reported on some of the needs and responses:

In eastern Turkey the MECC is working with Syrian Orthodox volunteers to truck emergency food and supplies to the refugees along the Turkish-Iraqi border. The Rev. Melvin Wittler, UCBWM missionary to Turkey since 1955, has been designated to head the MECC liaison office in Turkey. Mel reports that by the last week in March, five hundred refugees were already being cared for in six camps near the Turkey-Iraq border. The majority of these refugees were Christians. Many of the young men had been in the Iraqi army stationed in Baghdad and Kuwait. The churches of Istanbul dispatched two truckloads of clothing to be added to the assistance made available by CARITAS, local churches and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). By May the large-scale

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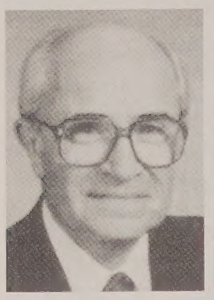
Message from the EVP



It may sound too simple, or too obscure, or too circuitous, or, some might be tempted to say, too trivial, but I am increasingly aware that you cannot receive a gift, unless you receive a gift!

As simple as that! A gift might be offered, but if you do not receive it, it has no place in your life! Your life is not changed, or modified, or made new by a gift unreceived.

I am struck by this obvious truth as I reflect on the gifts available to our churches in the USA through the spirit, the faith experience, and the life and witness of our partner churches around the world.

It is apparent from the rich history of the United Church Board for World Ministries, with its origins in the early days of the 19th century, that churches in the U.S have sought to share the gifts of God's grace overseas for more than 180 years. The actors in that history, as well as the historians who seek to capture its documentation, all know that gifts shared are from, by, and of the grace of God.

It is clearly consistent with our faith to celebrate that God's spirit and grace are present (wherever two or three are gathered), and the church in every place around the world has gifts to share.

The World Council of Churches' Seventh Assembly gathered in Canberra, Australia, in February 1991. Delegates, visitors, friends—over 4,000—gathered from among 319 member churches and more than 100 countries. We share a common gift—the gift of discipleship in Jesus Christ. And that tremendously rich diversity of Christian sisters and brothers have an unbelievably rich diversity of spirit gifts which they shared with each other.

The spirit comes to every place of the church. Those gifts of the spirit can serve to illumine and enrich other places—when shared and received.

The power and peace of music, prayer, and koinonia enlivened the Assembly's worship. The particular cultures represented by the music and liturgy from the various places of the church contributed to the stunning experience of worship.

—That diversity of music, liturgy, and prayers is available as a gift. Will we receive it?

The spiritual integrity of the indigenous peoples of Australia was transparent and transforming. A direct and clear sense of creation and the connection of our human place in creation was felt and mysteriously pondered. "The land doesn't belong to us—we belong to the land. We, and the land, are part of the one creation of the One Creator!"

—Understanding our human connectedness with each other and as part of creation is a radical gift of spirit. As we experienced this gift from our aboriginal Christian sisters and brothers, we affirmed afresh the distinctive gifts of Native Americans as a quality of spirituality analogous to the gifts of the aboriginals of Australia. Rich gifts calling us all to be born again! Will we receive these gifts?

The Persian Gulf War was underway as we assembled in Canberra. A full night of prayer for peace in the world was shared by all delegates and visitors at the "tent of worship." An American father receiving bread and wine at the communion table requested prayers for his son who was in Saudi Arabia as part of the allied coalition forces. At the communion table beside him was the Bishop of Baghdad, spiritual leader of one of the churches in Iraq. This American father and Iraqi church leader embraced as they acknowledged and confessed both the unity and the brokenness our human family shares.

—The Iraqis are not our enemies. They are our sisters and brothers in Christ. Will you receive and live with this gift?

Guests from the world faith communities—Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, and others—were present. They offered a witness to their experience of the spirit and received the World Council of Churches' Assembly global ecumenical witness and prayer. In the electrifying connecting points of interfaith dialogue, gifts were exchanged.

—Those gifts are available to every place of our church. Will we receive them?

The awareness of gifts offered could go on. The world church is alive with the spirit's gifts—richly diverse, mysteriously and hauntingly beautiful, potentially sources of conversion and renewal. The World Council of Churches' Assembly was a place where we could be freshly aware of gifts offered and received, gifts that are present in the everyday breathing in and breathing out of the life of faith of churches around the world. Our partner churches, covenanted with the United Church of Christ in the USA, have gifts that could enrich the life, spirit, faithfulness and witness of our church in every place in the United Church of Christ (USA). Will we receive them?

It may be too simple, but it is true, "You cannot receive a gift, unless you receive a gift!"

Scott Libby

The following page may be removed and duplicated for use as a bulletin insert.→

Continuing the Missionary Herald, founded in 1805, Whole Earth Newsletter is published three times a year by the United Church Board for World Ministries, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115. There are no restrictions on the use or duplication of material contained herein. Editor: Sandra J. Rooney; Editorial Assistant, Carmen Margarita Diaz. Annual subscription, $2.00.

Japan and the United Church Board for World Ministries

Map courtesy of Friendship Press

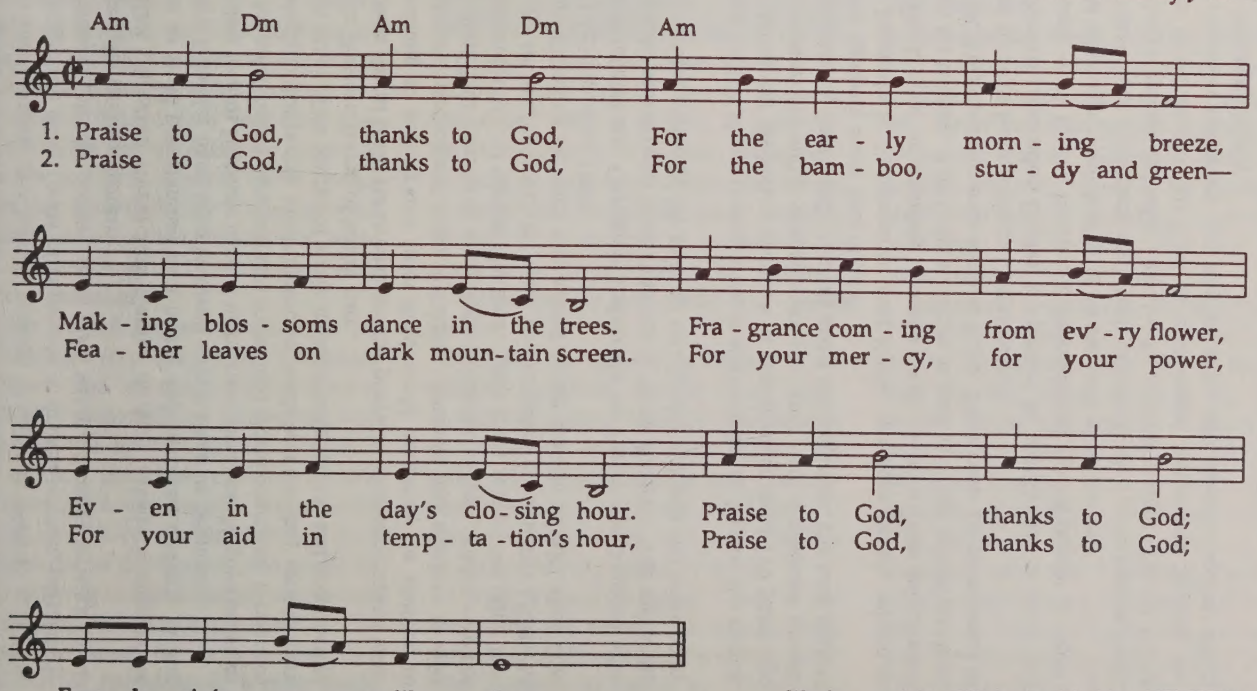
The involvement of the United Church Board for World Ministries in Japan began in 1869 through the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), and in 1879 through the Board of International Missions (BIM) of the Reformed Church in the U.S., both UCBWM predecessors. The ABCFM worked primarily in the Kansai area; the Reformed Church in northern Japan. When World War II broke out all missionaries were repatriated.

In 1941 all 34 Protestant denominations in Japan were forced by the political powers to band together to form the "United Church of Christ in Japan" (Nihon Kirisuto Kyodan, Kyodan for short). After the war, most of the denominations decided to stay together as an expression of Christian unity. The Orthodox Baptists, Lutherans, Anglicans, and a small part of the

Praise, Thanks to God

Judith May Newton

Tune: *Sakura* (traditional folk song)
Transcribed by J.M.N.



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Original Japanese text for Sakura (Cherry Trees) describes the beauty of cherry trees in bloom.

Reformed/Presbyterians opted to remain separate. Most of these churches are now part of the National Christian Council of Japan where they can work together. UCBWM missionary Aiko Carter assists in the editing of the Council's "Japan Christian Activity News" and is active in women's issues. The Council includes not only church denominations, which include the Korean Christian Church in Japan, but also church-related organizations such as the National YMCA and YWCA.

North American denominations now relate ecumenically with the Kyodan and the Korean Christian Church in Japan through the Japan-North American Commission on Cooperative Mission (JNAC) and the Council on Cooperative Mission (in Japan). All missionary personnel are sent and received through this latter agency. Tony Carter, UCBWM missionary in Japan since 1961, currently serves as JNAC treasurer.

The UCBWM currently has 36 missionaries in Japan. Twenty-one teach in related schools, five work at church agencies, six engage in evangelistic and church work in local congregations, one is in medical work, two in development education, and one engaged in ministering in homemaking.

The United Church of Christ in Japan, The Kyodan

The latest statistics for the Kyodan show that there are about 202,000 church members, of which over 102,000 are communicants. They are scattered around the country in 1,704 congregations. About 60,000 attend Sunday morning services, averaging 39 per church, and 38,000 attend Sunday School. There are 2,140 ministers, 1,865 of whom are pastors of local churches. The churches operate 201 kindergartens and 96 nursery schools. There are six Kyodan-related seminaries and divinity schools. Fifty-four university, colleges and school systems are related to the Kyodan. Some include many levels of schools, from kindergarten to graduate school. There are also many social service agencies operated or related to the Kyodan.

The Kyodan currently has 31 missionaries, both lay and ordained, working overseas. Among them are the Rev. and Mrs. Sakae Tomokawa, who are working in southern California under the care of the Southern California Conference in a ministry to Japanese living in the area.

Institutions and Agencies to which we relate

Zenrinkan (Good Neighbor Center) in Morioka, in the northern part of the island of Honshu, provides informal education programs and cultural exchange in the local community. It was begun with assistance of BIM missionaries in 1931.

Tohoku Gakuin University in Sendai was founded by the BIM in 1886. Many UCBWM missionaries have taught at this school throughout its history.

Miyagi Gakuin College, also in Sendai, was founded to provide education for women and was a pioneer in women's education in that part of Japan. UCBWM missionaries have taught at Miyagi for many years.

HELP Asian Women's Shelter (House of Emergency Love and Peace) in Tokyo was founded by Christian women in Japan in 1986 to give temporary shelter and other forms of assistance to abused women, particularly women brought into the country from third world countries to work in Japan's entertainment/sex industry.

The **Aizu Christian Rural Life Center** in Aizu Takada is engaged in ministries to rural communities in a highly industrialized country. Armin and Evelyn Kroehler have been involved with it since its beginning.

The **Asian Health Institute** located in the rural area near Nagoya provides training for basic health care workers from third world countries. It operates on the principle that people know their own needs best and they seek to learn from each other. The course of study includes acupressure and acupuncture along with Western forms of health care.

The **Asian Rural Institute** in Nishinasuno provides basic agricultural leadership training to participants from third world countries. In addition to formal classes, participants learn by doing. Students and teachers at ARI produce all of their own food, using appropriate technology, taking care not to use pesticides and to nurture the land. They learn respect for other cultures, ways to resolve conflicts, ways to strengthen community. UCBWM missionary Gretchen DeVries was named acting director of ARI after Tom Takami's retirement in 1990.

Japan International Christian University in Tokyo was founded after World War II with support from churches in North America. The university provides cultural exchange for students and faculty in Japan and other countries.

Several UCBWM missionaries teach at **Doshisha** in Kyoto, the largest private educational institution in Japan. It was founded over 110 years ago and has a university and a women's college, each with a graduate school; four high schools, four middle schools and a kindergarten. The total student population numbers more than 40,000.

Kobe Jogakuin in Nishinomiya, near Kyoto, has been closely related to the UCBWM since its founding a century ago. A prestigious educational institution for women, it includes a college as well as a high school division. Several UCBWM missionaries teach at Kobe. Their costs are reimbursed to the Board through Kobe College Corporation.

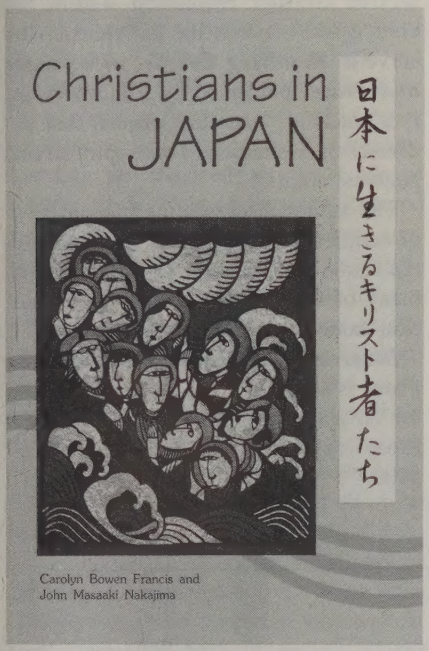
The **Buraku Liberation Center** is operated by the Kyodan to serve and do advocacy work for the Buraku, a discriminated against people in Japan. UCBWM missionary Bob Stieber is on the staff of the center.

Most missionary colleagues who teach in schools also participate actively in local congregations and other church-related organizations. The UCBWM continues to be heavily involved in educational institutions because the Kyodan considers education as a way for entry into Japanese society which respects education highly.

See Friendship Press study materials prepared for 1991-92 for more information about the church and mission in Japan.

New Resources

Christians in Japan



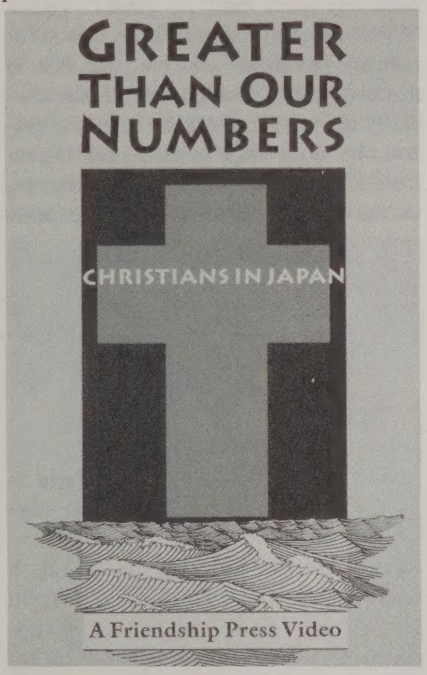
"On June 14, 1864, a young man of twenty-one left Hakodate, Hokkaido, after sneaking aboard an American ship. At that time to leave the country was strictly forbidden by the Japanese government . . . NIISIMA Shimeta (later renamed Joseph Hardy Neesima in the U.S. and NIIJIMA Jo in Japan) dared to break the law to realize his aspiration of studying abroad in order to better serve his country.

"After a little over a year-long journey, Niisima arrived at Boston, where he met Mr. and Mrs. Alpheus Hardy, prominent lay leaders in the Congregational Church and major benefactors also of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. . . ."

Thus begins the introduction to the Friendship Press study book, ***Christians in Japan***, and one chapter of the story of UCBWM's long mission relationship with Japan. In the book, Christians in Japan tell of their churches' exciting mission histories and new ministries, examine the strong social loyalties that challenge their faithfulness to the Gospel, and probe issues of living in a small island nation now an international economic giant.

Other resources for the Japan study are ***The Way of Faithfulness***, a study guide to be used with ***Christians in Japan***; ***Haiku, Origami, and More,*** a collection of worship and study resources; a ***Map 'n' Facts,*** which includes extensive information about Japan's history, geography, peoples, religions and churches.

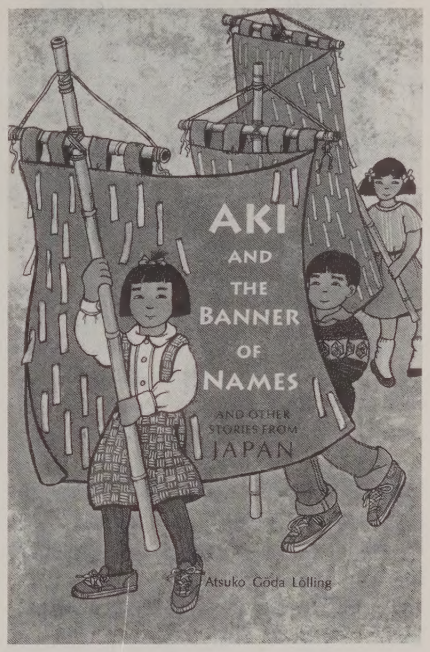
In ***Called to Be Peacemakers,*** Christians of Japan who show how their faith is shaping the search for world peace. Underlying this urgent quest is the potent memory of the Hiroshima-Nagasaki experience.



Greater Than Our Numbers is a 32-minute video which shows Japanese Christians' roles in society, in particular the changing role of women, young people seeking their own identity and efforts to combat discrimination against minority groups. The video has an accompanying study guide. *Greater than Our Numbers* is recommended for adults and youth groups.

Aki and the Banner of Names is the children's resource for the Japan study. Stories for children in grades one through six introduce special celebrations, the pressures for achievement and the supportive presence of the family of faith experienced by children in Japan. There is an accompanying teacher's guide.

Living Values/Changing Times is the theme for the second set of resources published by Friendship Press this year. ***With Integrity of Heart,*** by Clifford Elliott, is the primary study book. It invites people to consider how the biblical heritage embraces a complex world and to examine their understanding of God and the values that shape their lives. ***In Truth and Action*** is the accompanying study guide.



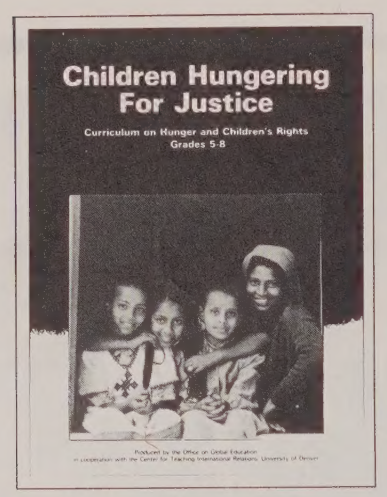
Seeking the Common Good, narrated by Ellen Goodman, is a 28-minute video that looks at how communities make ethical decisions.

Tales of the Heart, by Tom Hampson and Loretta Whalen, takes a fresh look at educating for peace and justice. ***Tales of the Heart*** provides unique methods for enhancing global awareness that invite leaders and participants to be present to their own hearts, attending to personal wholeness and holiness, and their ultimate effect on global healing.

As current events draw our attention to India, Friendship Press also offers a video, ***Encounters with Truth: Rajmohan Gandhi,*** which looks at the challenges facing the country through the work of Rajmohan Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi. There is an accompanying study guide for youth and adults.

A brochure which describes in full these and other new Friendship Press resources and ordering information is available from United Church Resources, 1-800-325-7061, or from Friendship Press Distribution Office, P.O. Box 37844 Cincinnati, OH 45222-0844; phone: (513) 948-8733.

Children and Justice



"Children Hungering for Justice" is a new resource for raising justice issues in church school. It explores hunger and human rights from a child's perspective. Stories of children in the streets of Brazil, in the basements of Lebanon, and the jails of South Africa, put a human face on global issues.

"Children Hungering for Justice" was produced by the Church World Service Office on Global Education in collaboration with the Center for Teaching International Relations at the University of Denver. The two one-hour sessions on world hunger and children's rights are available in three grade levels; k-4,5-8, 9-12. Cost: $3.50 for each level (set of 3 $10.00), plus 15% postage. Order from Church World Service, P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515-09698.

La Foret Video

A 25 minute video documenting the UCC gathering of social action leaders at Camp La Foret, Colorado, **"God Calls Us . . . Justice and Peace Ministries in the 90s,"** is available for $12.95 from the Washington office of OCIS, 110 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

Recommendations from the UCC Hunger Action Office

UCC Hunger Action Director Steven Nunn-Miller recommends ***Harvesting Peace: The Arms Race and Human Need,*** as "a concise, readable view that rightly connects neglected human need with the arms race." It is written by Arthur Simon, former director of Bread for the World.

Nunn-Miller also recommends ***Economics for Prophets: A Primer on Concepts, Realities, and Values in Our Economic System,*** by Walter Owensby. Nunn-Miller says "for those who are not trained economists, Owensby is helpful in providing understandable explanations and definitions of terms with which we all should be more conversant. For those who are looking for nuggets of economic analysis on a number of subjects, this book has more than its share." Nunn-Miller suggests that the book is not for radicals and those who read the title in that way will be disappointed. While Owensby doesn't write off the capitalist system, he does raise challenging issues, from a number of different perspectives, on the subject of our current economic system.

Conflict Resolution

"Let peace begin with me." So goes a familiar song. Charles R. McCollough, staff member of the UCC Office for Church in Society, has written a book which addresses the crucial need for effective conflict resolution within the church and between the individuals who serve it. ***Resolving Conflict with Justice and Peace,*** published by Pilgrim Press, is a practical "how to" manual that addresses the resolution of both spiritual and personal conflict.

The author discusses the biblical view of conflict and teaches the art of conflict resolution step by step. Real-life stories, many of them humorous, provide practical examples of the author's lessons.

Resolving Conflict with Justice and Peace is available for $14.95 (plus $2.00 for shipping) from Pilgrim Press, 700 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115-1100.

Peacock and Provance

(continued from page 1)

studied at the University of Salzburg in Austria during his senior year in high school and has travelled to Viet Nam, Jordan, India, Egypt and Greece. As a recipient of a UCBWM Third World Theological Fellowship, he had the opportunity to live in South America for almost two years (1985-1987).

"The encounter of God by people struggling in different cultures reveals to us a God who is bigger than the one we worship on Sunday mornings."

"The experiences of Christian communities from around the world can go a long way towards strengthening and deepening the faith of those of us here in the U.S.," Terry said in remarks to the Board of Directors. "The encounter of God by people struggling in different cultures reveals to us a God who is bigger than the one we worship on Sunday mornings. Discovering and realizing how God is present and active throughout the world can lead us to more faithful lives and relationships—with God and among ourselves. And, fundamentally, I believe people in our congregations want their faith to mean more to them than just a worshipful hour once each week."

Terry described the World Ministries in the U.S. program as one that can bring Christian experiences from around the world to impact congregations here as well as providing participation in global concerns for congregations here. "By providing ways for people to become more compassionate, they become more faithful," he said. "And a more faithful people becomes, in turn, even more compassionate."

The election of Susan Peacock and Terry Provance completes the world ministries in the U.S. staff team, which also includes Sandra Rooney, Secretary for Mission Education and Interpretation, and the Rev. Arthur Cribbs, Secretary for Racial and Ethnic Minority Constituency Development and Recruitment, all of whom will be located in the UCBWM offices in Cleveland, effective July 23, 1991, and the Rev. Kenneth Ziebell, Associate for Global Education and Advocacy and also Regional Secretary for Europe, who will remain in New York. Dr. Scott S. Libbey, Executive Vice President of the UCBWM, and the Rev. Bertrice Wood, Associate for Planning and Administration, are also relocating to Cleveland.

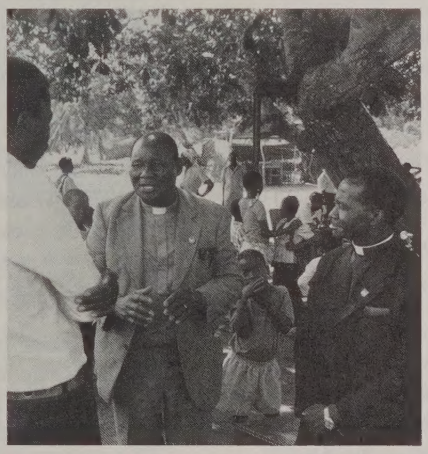
Mozambique Churches Launch Decade of Evangelism

The Christian Council of Mozambique launched a "Decade of Evangelism" on December 9, 1990. In recent years the CCM has been heavily involved in major emergency and development programs assisting the hundreds of thousands of victims of the fighting between Renamo forces and those of the Mozambique government. Council members felt that while the relief activities must continue there is need for new efforts of evangelism throughout the country. The Mozambique government was approached by the Council for permission to use the national radio as a part of the launching ceremonies, the first time that this had been done. The nation-wide effort involves all of the member churches of the Council. It centers around training lay people to assume the major evangelistic role. More than 100 persons were trained in various centers throughout the country prior to the "kick-off."

"Because of the continued violence in rural areas, first priority will be given to working in the major population centers."

As the program develops more lay members will be trained throughout the country. Because of the continued violence in rural areas, first priority will be given to working in the major population centers. In discussing the Council's evangelistic thrust Bishop Denis Sengulane, Anglican bishop for Mozambique, said that his favorite text in training lay evangelists is Acts 18:9-10: "One night the Lord said to Paul in a vision, 'Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to harm you, for there are many in this city who are my people.'" The bishop went on to say that the initial response to the efforts of the lay evangelists inviting persons to join in exploring the Christian faith has been very encouraging.

These evangelistic efforts are being undertaken in spite of continued violence throughout the country caused by the Renamo forces which continue to seek to destabilize the current government. Pastors and lay people of the Anglican, Methodist and Congregational churches have been killed in Renamo attacks. Bishop Sengulane said it is imperative that the Christian churches undertake increased efforts to bring about reconciliation between the opposing forces and one of the best ways to do this is to share Christ's gospel with the people of the country. The Christian Council has been supporting the reconciliation efforts that are currently going on between the government and representatives of Renamo.



The Rev. A.T. Litsuri, Mozambique Synod UCCSA

The Christian Council of Mozambique has seventeen member churches and five affiliated members, plus the Mozambican Bible Society. The Rev. Felipe Banzi is the Council's General Secretary. Among the members of the CCM is the Synod of Mozambique of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa.

At the annual Assembly of the UCCSA, Mozambique Synod Secretary the Rev. A. T. Litsuri reported a rapid increase in church membership and the establishment of new congregations. The Synod has reported the highest rate of growth of any of the synods and regions of the UCCSA within the past year. The major problem faced by the church is that of leadership. The current emphasis on training lay leadership will be very helpful in nurturing church growth as will the upgrading of formal training programs for the church.

UCBWM missionaries Larry and Carol Gilley are assisting in a Bible school that is training leaders for the Congregational churches in Mozambique. The Rev. Ruth Minter, a UCC pastor and most recently an associate conference minister of the Central Atlantic Conference, has gone to Mozambique to teach at Recatla Seminary near the capital city of Maputo. She is also assisting with local UCCSA congregations in the area. Ruth's appointment is jointly supported by the UCBWM, the Disciples of Christ's Division of Overseas Ministries and the Presbyterian Church (USA).

In addition to continued support of the Mozambique Synod of the UCCSA and emergency programs of the Christian Council, the UCBWM has sent a special grant of $3,000 for the Council's evangelism program. Efforts are also underway to secure funds to assist three local Congregational churches in Mozambique with urgently needed building projects.

UCBWM Aids Angolan Church

Hopes for peace in Angola are moving toward reality and the two warring factions are beginning to look towards a unified government for the first time in many years. The UCBWM is turning its attention to the needs of the Evangelical Congregational Church, which has been divided for many years along similar geographical lines as the political factions.

Just prior to the settlement arrived at by the political leaders of the country, church leaders from both parts of the church in Angola met, anticipating a reunification and reconciliation after some 16 years of painful separation and conflict. The UCBWM is providing $10,000 for the reunification and reconciliation process and is seeking an additional $15,000 in order to respond to a request from the church for assistance as leaders of the two groups come together to plan for both the physical and spiritual healing that must take place.

Issue Perspective:

Shaded area indicates regions inhabited by the Kurds.

At the height of the Kurdish crisis, one thousand Kurdish refugees were dying each day, succumbing to hunger, cold and disease. Two million refugees made the border areas between Iraq and Iran and between Iraq and Kuwait their temporary home. In the U.S. little was known or heard of the Kurds until this recent crisis. Who are they? And what are some of the elements that have contributed to this crisis?

Historical Background

The Kurds go back before Islam itself. They are probably descended from the Aryan tribes that settled west of the Caspian Sea 4,000 years ago. Kurdistan, the land of the Kurds, has never been an independent country. In the 16th century, three out of four Kurds lived in the Ottoman Empire. The rest lived in Persia. In the 19th century, a series of nationalist uprisings by the Kurds against the Ottoman and Persian Empires were crushed. The Kurdish population today is perhaps 20 million or more. The majority live in an area about the size of Nebraska in northern Iraq, northwestern Iran, and southeastern Turkey, which contains about half of the total. There are smaller communities in Syria and the Soviet Union.

Kurdish hopes for a homeland and autonomy have been closely tied with the conflicts of their host countries. The modern nation states have in turn used the Kurds for their own political ends. The first attempt at modern political organization followed World War I when Kurdish nationalists based their appeal for Kurdish statehood on U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points of January 1918. The Points provided for an "unmolested opportunity for the autonomous development of minorities within the Ottoman Empire." But the founder of modern Turkey, Kemal Ataturk, defending his country against the ambitions of Greece and the major western powers, rejected the Sevres Treaty of 1920 which would have provided for the creation of Armenia and Kurdistan in addition to the Hijaz (the area that comprised the Islamic Holy sites in the western part of Saudi Arabia), Syria and Iraq. He forced the allies to draw up the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne which excluded the Kurds. Between 40,000 to 250,000 Kurds died in the suppression of revolts by Turkey between 1925 and 1938.

In Iraq, Kurds were officially recognized by the Revolution in Baghdad of 1958, but poor relations with the new government led to a war of liberation to secure autonomy which lasted until the rise of Baathist power in 1968. Fighting renewed in the 1970's when Baghdad did not honor its agreements on Kurdish autonomy. The 1958 Iraqi revolution, in addition, triggered closer ties between Egypt and Syria, spelling trouble for Syria's 1.3 million Kurds in the 1970s.

Iran's support for the Kurdish struggle under the Shah ended when Iraq and Iran signed the Algiers Agreement in March 1974. With this, the Kurds also lost U.S. support and the Kurdish leader Mostafa Barzani fled to the U.S. The Islamic Republic used its interpretation of Islamic law to deny autonomy to Iranian Kurds. However, Iran, where one in four Kurds live, is the only country that recognizes part of its land as Kurdistan. When the Iraq-Iran war broke out in 1980, Kurdish areas again became major battlefields. The Iraqi government began new negotiations with the Kurds, but these were broken off when Turkey's Prime Minister visited Bahgdad.

Investigation by the United Nations in 1986 confirmed that chemical weapons had been used against the Kurds during the Iran-Iraq war. Eight thousand died in another chemical attack against the Kurdish town of Halabjah. Iraq launched a third chemical attack after the August 1988 ceasefire, killing thousands and forcing 100,000 to flee to Turkey and Iran.

Iraq's Kurds took advantage of the Iraqi regime's recent Gulf war defeat for another opportunity in their struggle for autonomy. Although initial signals from the Bush administration seemed to favor this initiative, no support was given to the Kurds. According to Vera Saeedpour, founder of the Brooklyn-based Kurdish program, support was not forthcoming because a strong Kurdish role in the region "would jeopardize U.S. efforts to hold together the Coalition making war against Saddam Hussain." Israel does not approve of Kurdish nationalist links with Palestinian groups, and, unofficially, supports Turkey in its denial of an Armenian Holocaust, while Saudi Arabia told the U.S. administration that it did not want to see the Kurds assume power in Iraq.

The country most threatened by Kurdish self-determination is Turkey. Fifty percent of the world's 27.9 million Kurds live within Turkish borders where they are denied their identity as an ethnic minority or the use of the Kurdish language, folklore and names. In 1979, 15 Kurdish provinces were placed under martial law, provoking the growth of leftist movements and extensive guerrilla activity.

The Kurdish Situation

Religion

There is a diversity of religious beliefs among the Kurds, with Sunni Islam providing a mantle under which this variety has been maintained. Zoroastrianism was very likely the first official religion of the Kurds, although Christianity gained a foothold in the first century. With the fall of the Sassanid dynasty in 642 AD, most Kurds became Sunni Muslims. Although one of Islam's foremost champions— Salah-Al-Din (or Saladdin)—was a Kurd, gnostic and mystical beliefs still hold sway.

Photo CWSW

Kurdish refugees in Iran

Political Organizations

In Iran, the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) is allied with the Communist Tudeh Party and works for the right of self-determination of Kurds within the framework of a democratic Iran. The Komala (Organization of Revolutionary Toilers of Iranian Kurdistan) emerged after the 1979 Revolution, organizing peasant resistance against landlords. The party fused with three ideologically related Iranian organizations in 1983 and is in conflict with the KDPI.

In Iraq, the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) was founded by Mustafa Barzani, who received support from Iran and the CIA, and thus was able to force Baghdad into a negotiated agreement for autonomy in 1970. However, the party has been constantly involved in internal rifts stemming from the rival leadership of Ibrahim Talabani, whose *peshmergas*—resistance fighters meaning "those who face death"—have sometimes fought alongside Iraqi troops against Barzani's supporters. Under the leadership of Barzani's sons Mas'ud and Idris, the KDP has worked closely with Iran against the KDPI.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) was set up in Syria by Talabani after his split with Barzani. After losing over 800 men in a 1978 clash with the PUK, Talabani reorganized and set up links with Iran's Komala and KDPI, but reentered negotiations with Baghdad. When these broke down, hostilites with the government resumed. The PUK aims for national self-determination. A third organization is the Socialist Party of Kurdistan-Iraq (SPKI). Led by a break-away associate of Barzani, the SPKI also aims at autonomy for Iraqi Kurds. Kurds are well represented in the Iraqi Communist Party also.

In Turkey, the most radical Kurdish organization is the Workers' Party of Kurdistan (PKK). Active against the Turkish military, it was formally founded in 1978 by Abdullah Ocalan. While the PKK has alienated many sections of Kurdish society by its ruthlessness, it has also gained many supporters among young people. In 1986 and 1987, Turkey's air force raided PKK camps in Iraq.

Olive Branch Appeal

Church World Service (CWS), the relief, development and refugee resettlement arm of the National Council of Churches of Christ, through which the UCC does much of its disaster response, has launched a Council-wide "Olive Branch Campaign" in response to the recent Middle East crisis. This ecumenical campaign seeks $1,000,000 from the participating denominations to meet some of the humanitarian needs, including the needs of Kurdish refugees. Gifts should be sent to your Conference, clearly marked for the "Middle East Crisis."

In addition, call or write Senate Foreign Relations' Committee and South Asian Affairs Subcommittee Chair Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D) at the U.S. Senate, Washington D.C. 20510, (202) 224-4451; or House Foreign Affairs' Europe and the Middle East Subcommittee Chair Rep. Lee Hamilton (D), U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515, (203) 225-5315, urging support for UN peace keeping efforts in the region.

Further Steps

This Issue Perspective is designed as a concise key to the understanding of a critical issue. If you would like to maintain a continuing interest in Middle East issues and are willing to undertake an advocacy role on these issues when needed, you may want to participate in the Middle East network of the UCBWM's Global Advocates Ministry. You will receive resource materials and briefings on a regular basis, as well as special alerts about critical issues requiring action. Membership forms for the Global Advocates Ministry are available from the Global Education and Advocacy Office, UCBWM, 475 Riverside Drive, 16th Floor, New York, NY 10115.

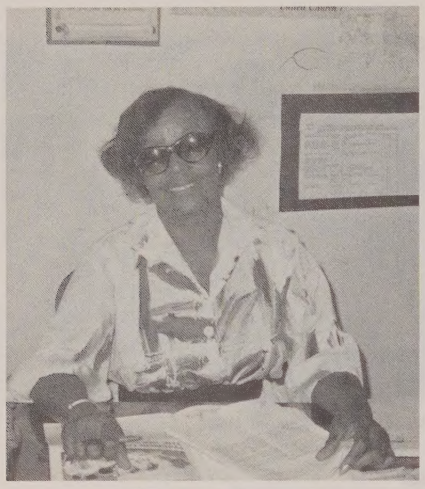
Sources:

Kurdistan, by Z. Arshi S.K. Zabihi, photos by N. Kasraian, Oriential Art Publishing, Sweden: 1990.

"The Suppression of the Kurds in Turkey," by Michael Gunter, *Kurdish Times,* Fall 1990.

"The Kurds Between Iran and Iraq," by Martin Von Bruinessen, *Middle East Report,* July-August 1986.

How We See It From Here



Edith Harris-Bernard

From Jamaica and Ecuador come two stories of churches seeking to address the need for theological training for those with vocations in the church and meet a critical shortage of ministers. **Edith Harris-Bernard** is working with the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman. She writes of an innovative program called the Institute for Theological and Leadership Development (ITLD). **Victor and Violeta Vaca,** working with the Ecuadoran Rural Pastoral Ministry based in Quito, write of the Institute of Training and Theological/Pastoral Education.

The program in Jamaica was established in 1989-90 as a non-resident three-year training program for ministerial candidates and full-time church workers, including lay pastors. Training is not conducted in a seminary setting but on the mission field, employing the work/study method.

Edith writes: "The congregation and the community become the classroom and the instructional content is primarily through workshops with emphasis on the practical work among the parishioners. The curriculum includes, among other subjects, Christian Education, Bible Study, Pastoral Care and Counselling, Preaching and Church Administration. Candidates for the program are chosen based on requirements of a pre-designed system which considers experience at the local church level a great asset."

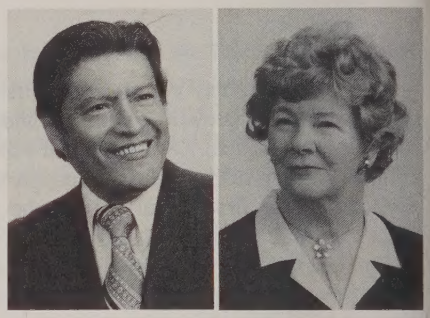
Working at charges located mainly in the interior, in isolated rural areas, Edith reports that the interns have had a significant impact—an increase in church membership, organization of youth groups (in areas where unemployment is more than 50% for those between the ages of 18- and 35) and a greatly enlarged area receiving pastoral care through visitation.

"One Sunday morning I walked six miles one way in 90 degree heat to a church. . . ."

One "pastor intern" describes his ministry: "One Sunday morning I walked six miles one way in 90 degree heat to a church because I had promised the youth there that we would organize a mission program for them. It was well worth the effort because over forty youths reported. All four of my churches/congregations are many miles apart and on many occasions I have walked to each congregation." This same intern reports a 75% increase in one church's membership during the year.

Transportation poses a real problem for the trainees because neither the ITLD program nor the congregations have the financial resources for cars. Some of the congregations have recently secured funds to aid in purchasing a few used vehicles for use in the program.

Mrs. Norma Smellie is director of the ITLD program. The goal of the planners is that it will ultimately become fully accredited. Informal links have already been established with the United Theological College of the West Indies as well as with some overseas-based institutions.



Victor and Violet Vaca

The Institute of Training and Theological/Pastoral Education in Ecuador came about in response to the need for theological/pastoral training for peasants and Indians who cannot leave their farms, work and families to attend a formal institute/seminary. The Vacas write:

"It is a mobile institute in the sense that we are taking the training to the people out in the communities—establishing 3 regional centers. In each, there are surrounding communities and villages that could easily take advantage of this kind of setup where they wouldn't have to leave their work and homes. The sessions will be on Saturdays—from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. We are seven on the teaching team, including two Indians, Vic and myself. Remember we are now in the heart of the quichua speaking communities so there will have to be some translation. Among the entrance requisites, you have to be able to read and write and know the four arithmetic operations. The majority of the people attending will have had some elementary school—perhaps—thus all training will have to be on a simple level. The general objective is to train workers and pastors for the different ministries in the rural evangelical churches related to the Pastoral. Courses will include Christian Education, Introduction to the Bible, Methods of Bible Study, Old and New Testament, Church Administation, etc."

How We See It From Here

***Ana and Tod Gobledale** are completing their terminal leave after serving in South Africa since 1983. They have worked with thirteen African congregations of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa in Zululand. They have been regular reporters of the circumstances which the system of apartheid forces on the Africans of that country. In a letter earlier this year they remind us how little has changed for all of the rhetoric of recent months.*

The baby's head is just crowning. Luckily for us and the woman in labor, we're not alone. Gogo (Grandmother) Mhlongo takes charge calling for towels and water. As I hand her a towel, the baby's head emerges, quickly followed by two slippery shoulders. The baby's out. A little grey heap. Is it alive? There seems to be a lot of blood.

". . . the majority of the Black population live without electricity, without employment, without . . . without . . . without. . . ."

In the still darkness I think of that birth so long ago we celebrate so sterilely each Christmas. We forget that the conditions of our Lord's birth were more like this, in a poorly lit, crowded room with a dung floor, than like our high-tech hospitals or home birthings. The candle flickers in a cold breeze that blows in around the single window. The stars are fading with the dawn.

We cringe upon seeing the piece of broken bottle Gogo will use to cut the cord. A prayer is murmured as she ties strings to the cord and saws until it is severed.

What are this mother's hopes and expectations for her child? Here in South Africa where as many as 124 out of 1000 Black infants die in their first 12 months of life, and only 9 out of 1000 white babies die. Here where almost 25% of all Black children die under the age of 4 compared to only 2.6% of white children. Here where whites enjoy first-world lifestyles and facilities while the majority of the Black population live without electricity, without employment, without . . . without . . . without. . . .

Ncane's hopes and expectations for her child should be the same as ours for Amy and Mandla. But they aren't. This must be changed.

Life is a miracle. We, as Christians are called to preserve it and enrich it: physically, emotionally, and spirtually. How are we responding to the needs of our sisters and brothers like Ncane and her child? A food parcel and a blanket can help. But we believe God has called us to bring news of a new creation and to work for it, to share the bounty of this world with ALL God's children. To name the evil powers that dominate this world and ourselves and oppose them. To cry for justice and bring it into fruition. To overturn the powers of the world and in ourselves that keep this mother, and so many other mothers like her, poor.

***Ron and Edith Seaton** have served in India since 1956, first appointed by the Presbyterians, now jointly appointed by the UCC, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the Presbyterians. They have been engaged in providing health services with the Church of North India. They recently concluded their service and in their last general letter from India they wrote:*

We have learned a lot:

—Ultimately we are totally dependent on the Lord, whether for train connections or for healing of hepatitis or "Delhi Dengue" fever.

"Who of us Christians, like the devoted Muslim, kneels to pray five times a day wherever we are, even in a crowded train?"

—"Christians," Maha-atma (great spirit) Gandhi once said, "are ordinary people making an extraordinary claim," but the church in India still fails to live up to that claim. Gandhiji also said that if Christians really followed Christ India (and the world) would fall at His feet.

—Who of us Christians, like the devoted Muslim, kneels to pray five times a day wherever we are, even in a crowded train?

—Every person, in fact every part of creation, deserves respect because of the one who is the Creator, but we exploit and pollute and destroy God's creation, and we forget that Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Buddhists, Parsees, and even those with no religion at all are still God's children. God continues his work of making new creatures in Christ.

. . . We leave not entirely sure of the extent of the changes we have made—maybe a few lives "saved," some disabilities corrected, some pain relieved; in our writing and editing perhaps some useful community health information shared; in it all trying to make clear the claims of Christ.

Bob Porter, *who was first appointed to serve in Sri Lanka in 1981, is currently on home assignment. He describes the last three years of turmoil in Sri Lanka as having "flown like a hurricane." The hostilities which broke out a year ago cut off the North. Since then an embargo has been in effect, which he says extends to medical supplies and power. Bob writes about how they have been coping.*

Despite these various situations that have shaped our daily life in the Jaffna Peninsula (most importantly perhaps the bombardment of the towns, some almost totally destroyed) the Jaffna Diocese has met the challenge in many ways. It has not only brought food and supplies and mail to us from Colombo, but it has continued opening new day-care centers, new churches, and has been actively involved in the construction of refugee housing. One has to speak of the movement of the Holy Spirit in a real sense, because the attitude is not one of defeat but of empowerment, even though many in the Church have suffered losses.

"We live with the sound of bombers and helicopters strafing every day, and often into the night."

This attitude extends to the schools as well. Despite the fact that our generator was expropriated before it was used once, that our building materials have been taken for other purposes, and that our musical instruments have been commandeered, the mood of the school is one of enthusiasm for education.

. . . We live with the sound of bombers and helicopters strafing every day, and often into the night. Shelling kills whole families in areas closer to the Army camps. If one is not in agreement with the separatists, one is liable to lose his life. . . . From the Sri Lankan side I get almost no resistance to my being in the North. . . . My relationship to Tamils, of the community and of the Church, seems to have developed to the place where I feel like I've been commissioned by them to come to the States, instead of the reverse. . . .

John and Leah Atwater *from Ann Arbor, Michigan, have spent six months as volunteers in Vellore, India, John as medical consultant and teaching in the fields of epidemiology, health planning and management, Leah in administrative work and assisting in teaching computer programs. They write:*

As volunteers with CMC&H's Rural Unit for Health and Social Affairs (RUHSA), we are still learning and receiving at least as much as we are teaching and giving. Being the only westerners on the RUHSA staff affords constant opportunities for stimulating informal exchange of ideas and participation in the direct service, community development and training activities, which constitute RUHSA's mission. The experience of witnessing Christian faith through sharing in service to a largely non-Christian community is proving to be enriching beyond our fondest expectations.

TAPOLYAIS RESPOND TO NEEDS IN ROMANIA

Circumstances in eastern Europe are creating new challenges and new opportunities for the church. In response to one such opportunity, Mihaly and Gizella Tapolyai of Cleveland, Ohio, have been appointed for a three year term in Romania. The appointment, the first ever to Romania by the UCBWM, is at the request of the Calvin Synod of the United Church of Christ and the Reformed Church in Romania.

Mihaly Tapolyai completed medical school and received accreditation as a psychiatrist in Budapest. For 36 years he worked as a family doctor. In addition to practicing medicine, he served as a lay evangelist in the Reformed Church in Hungary. After coming to the U.S., he enrolled in Ashland Theological Seminary, completing his theological studies in 1990. He was ordained by Calvin Synod, UCC, in December 1990.

In March 1991 the Tapolyais went to Romania to serve the Hungarian ethnic minority there, where he will utilize his specialized training in crisis counseling to assist communities struggling with ethnic discrimination and other problems. Gizella received a degree from the College for Education in Hungary and worked 24 years as a special teacher and psychologist and counselor for problem teenagers.

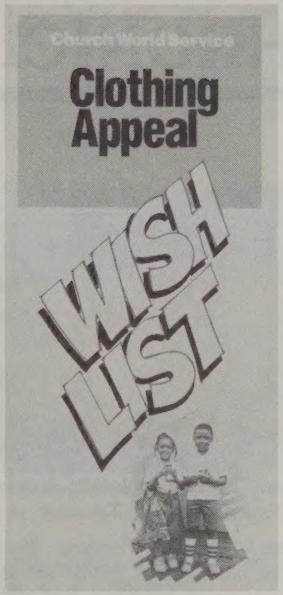
CWS—NO MORE USED CLOTHES

Since its founding in 1946, Church World Service has shipped 225,457,349 pounds of used clothing and blankets valued at $178,242,451 overseas in response to emergency needs. For many people collecting used clothing and preparing it for pick up by a Church World Service truck has been a meaningful activity. After pick up in local communities the clothing went on to the Service Center operated for Church World Service by volunteers of the Church of the Brethren in New Windsor, Maryland. There the clothes were sorted and packed for shipment to all parts of the world in response to appeals from churches and church-related agencies.

"Partner agencies have shifted their emphasis from donated clothing to developing local textile industries."

For a whole variety of reasons, Church World Service has greatly reduced the kinds of material assistance sent overseas in response to emergencies. Partner agencies have shifted their emphasis from donated clothing to developing local textile industries. Cash gifts allow local purchase, thereby reducing freight costs, which have risen as the U.S. government reimbursement for such costs has been greatly reduced in the past two years. There is great need to use the small amount available for freight reimbursement for high priority emergency items such as medicines and food.

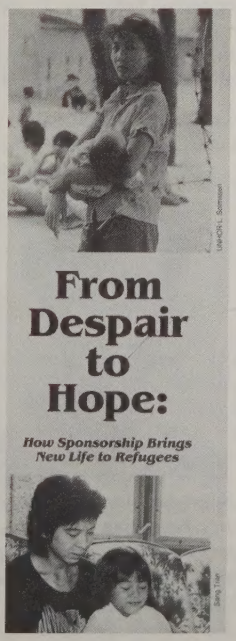
In place of the used clothing collection, Church World Service has expanded its Blanket Program and the need continues for Health Kits, School Kits, Sewing Kits, and Layettes. These programs can help bridge the generation gap in a local congregation looking for ways to involve members of all ages in meaningful projects. Church school children and Boy and Girl Scouts have assembled health kits and school kits. Many church groups raise money for the Blanket Fund at $5 per blanket. Mother's groups and Women's Fellowship groups have assembled layettes and sewing kits.



These expanded programs are described in a new brochure, "Church World Service Clothing Appeal Wish List." Copies are available at no cost from United Church Resources, 1-800-325-7061.

Refugees Still Seek Homes in U.S.

In 1990 the UCBWM Refugee Resettlement Program assisted 725 refugees to find homes in the U.S. Local church sponsors are an important part of the process. For more information call United Church Resources (see above) for a brochure which outlines the process.

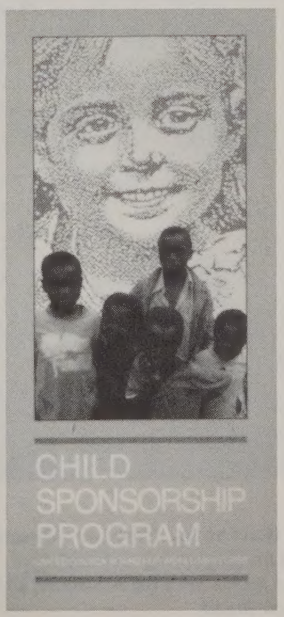


A Generous Gift Aids Child Sponsorship Program

Caroline Peters wasn't a member of a UCC church. She hadn't sponsored a child with the Board's child sponsorship program. But when she died she left $50,000 from her estate as an endowment for the program.

Caroline E. Peters, of Madison, Wisconsin, was in her 90s. She had no immediate family, but is described as loving children and wanting to help them, especially those in need. Partially sighted she engaged Bernie Hartwig, a member of Lake Edge UCC, to do housekeeping for her. The two women talked about many things, including how Caroline would dispose of her estate after her death. Bernie knew Joan Shropshire, a former member of the UCBWM and an active member of Lake Edge Church. From Joan she learned of the UCBWM Child Sponsorship Program. Bernie talked to Caroline about this program. One conversation led to another and following Caroline's death April 8, 1990, the UCBWM learned of her generous gift. The interest from her gift will help fund the Child Sponsorship Program, which in 1990 provided assistance for a total of 1,633 children and older adults in thirteen centers around the world.

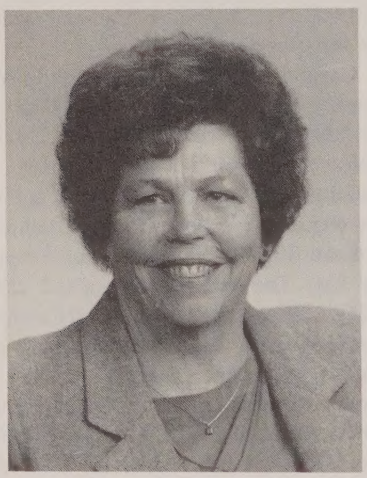
A new brochure which describes the Child Sponsorship Program is available from United Church Resources, 1-800-325-7061.



CHRONICLE

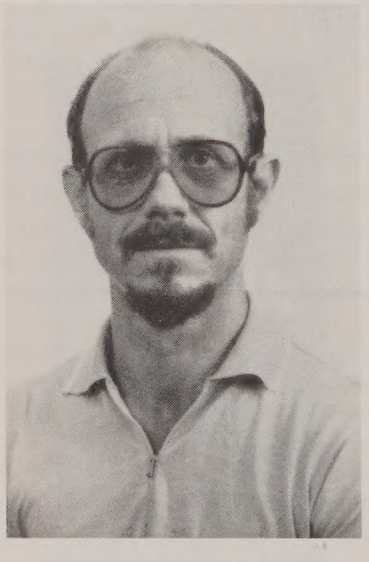
APPOINTMENTS

Afghanistan



Helen I. McClure, Volunteer, beginning February 1, 1991, while she serves as administrator for the Physical Therapy School of Kabul and the Preventive Eye Care Program in Kabul, Afghanistan, at the request of the International Assistance Mission. This is a joint appointment with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Home church: University Christian, San Diego, CA.

Brazil



David Blackburn, Common Ministry Appointment, beginning September 1, 1991, while he serves with the Methodist Church in Northeast Brazil.

Japan

Gretchen DeVries with ARI founding director Toshihiro (Tom) Takami

Gretchen L. DeVries, Volunteer, for one year beginning July 1, 1991, while she serves as Director of the Asian Rural Institute, in Nishinomiya. Home church: Pilgrim UCC, Cortland, NE.

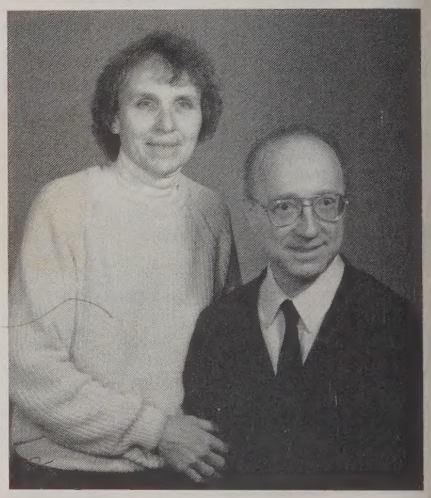
Illinois

Hans H.W. Hachtmann and Raquel E.H. De Hachtmann, International Associates, six months beginning February 1, 1991, while they serve in the Illinois South Conference. This appointment is on nomination by the Evangelical Congregational Church of Brazil.

Palestine

Marla R. Schrader, Jerusalem Associate, fifteen months, beginning February 1, 1991, while she serves with the Middle East Council of Churches Ecumenical Travel Office. Home church: Florissant Valley Church, Florissant, MO.

Philippines



Danford M. Byrens and Emily H. Byrens, Volunteers, beginning May 1, 1991, while they serve on the music faculty of Silliman University, Dumaguete City, Philippines. Home church: Olivet Congregational Church, Olivet, MI.

Romania

Mihaly A. Tapolyai and Gizella Tapolyai, Romania Associates, three years beginning March 1, 1991, while he serves as counselor/therapist to ethnic Hungarians returning to their Romanian homeland. This appointment is at the request of the Calvin Synod of the UCC and the Reformed Church in Romania. Home church: Hungarian Reformed Church, Cleveland, OH.

See story page 12.

RETURN TO FIELD

David C. Gallup, India, as of December 1, 1990, after a home assignment of seven months.

Lawrence C. and Carol C. Gilley, Mozambique, as of May 1, 1991, after a home assignment of five months.

Barbara D. Mensendiek, Japan, as of April 1, 1991, after a home assignment of three months.

EXTENSION OF TERM

William S. Cundiff, Japan, extended to nine years through March 31, 1995.

William G. Edmonds and Anna G. Edmonds, Turkey, extended to three years, three months through March 31, 1991.

Audrey N. Gilg, Japan, extended to five years, nine months through July 31, 1991.

Edith N. Harris-Bernard, Jamaica, extended to three years, four months through March 31, 1991.

Martha Mensendiek, Japan, extended to two years, seven months through March 31, 1992.

Jeffrey L. Phillips, Zimbabwe, extended to three years, six months through December 31, 1991.

Howard I. Towne and Anna May Towne, Philippines, extended to three years, three months through May 31, 1991.

TRANSFERS

William L. Graffam, transferred as of August 1, 1981, to St. George Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bortfeld, Germany and St. Mathias Evangelical Lutheran Church in Wedtlenstedt, Germany.

Jeffrey L. Phillips, transferred from the Chikore and Chinaa Secondary Schools in Zimbabwe to the Mt. Silinda and Beacon Hill High Schools.

Amanda G. Shipman, transferred as of January 1, 1990, from Mt. Silinda and Beacon Hill Schools in Zimbabwe to the United Theological College in Harare, Zimbabwe.

HOME ASSIGNMENT

Charles H. Brown, Turkey, four months, beginning October 1, 1991.

Anthony Carter and Aiko Carter, Japan, two months, beginning June 1, 1991.

Edith Harris-Bernard, Jamaica, six months, beginning April 1, 1991.

Padmasani Gallup, India, six months, beginning September 1, 1991.

Carol A. Garn, Turkey, two months, beginning July 1, 1991.

Audrey N. Gilg, Japan, two months, beginning August 1, 1991.

Richard D. Lake and Mary Beth Lake, Philippines, six months, beginning April 1, 1991.

Nancy Molin, Nepal, five months, beginning August 15, 1991.

Allen Myrick and Judith C. Myrick, Zimbabwe, five months, beginning August 1, 1991.

Peter Savage, Costa Rica, three months, beginning June 1, 1991.

COMPLETION OF TERM

Lisa M. Giragosian, Palestine, Special Appointment, as of January 31, 1991.

Shannon A. Griffin, Costa Rica, Special Appointment, as of February 15, 1991.

Michael R. Mullin and Susan M. Mullin, Haiti, Associates, as of March 31, 1991.

RETIREMENT

Gretchen L. DeVries, Japan, as of June 30, 1991.

William G. Edmonds and Anna G. Edmonds, Turkey, as of April 30, 1991.

Margaret A. Garner, Japan, as of March 31, 1991.

Fernie M. Scovel, Turkey, as of January 31, 1991.

TERMINAL LEAVE

Theodore N. Gobledale and Ana K. Gobledale, South Africa, for six months beginning January 1, 1991.

LOSSES TO FAMILY

Adella Whitcomb, missionary to India and Ghana from 1928 to 1962, died on February 24, 1991, in Eden Home, New Braunfels, Texas, at the age of 91.

Adella Whitcomb (nee Rodeheffer) and husband Dr. Elmer W. Whitcomb were commissioned by the Board of International Missions of the Evangelical and Reformed Church in 1928. From 1929 until 1936 the Whitcombs were at the Mission Hospital at Tilda (with a 3 month sojourn at Bamdha Bihar Scottish Mission Eye Hospital). During 1937-39 they served at Baitalpur-Chandkhuri Leprosy Hospital, after which they returned to Tilda Mission Hospital, where they stayed until 1945. After a long furlough, the Whitcombs returned to India in 1947, serving at the Mission Hospital at Khariar, Orissa, and Fort Multan, West Pakistan. In 1955 Elmer and Adella took up service first at the Evangelical Presbyterian Church Hospital in Worawora, Ghana, then at the Dispensary Hospital in Adiome. They spent their final years (1959-61) of mission service back at Worawora.

During the Whitcombs' time of service in India and Africa, Adella was engaged in social service work among the patients and patients' relatives in hospitals where they worked and in the surrounding villages. She supervised the work of evangelism in the hospitals and Sunday church school for children, assisted pastors and teachers in church-related schools, and held Bible classes for nursing students.

The Whitcombs were designated missionaries emeriti November 6, 1962, in honor of their 34 years of service. In retirement, they lived at the Eden Home in New Braunfels, TX, were Adella remained following Elmer's death in November 1979.

The Whitcombs' son Thomas lives in Salem, MO; son William in Madison, WI; son John in Pensacola, FL; and daugther Anna May Lennington in St. Joseph, MO.

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David Stowe
Lloyd G. Van Vactor
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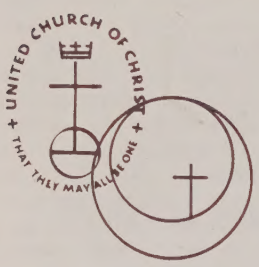

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Church Responds to Gulf Crisis

(continued from page 1)

movement of refugees back to Iraq had relieved the situation in Turkey.

In Iraq, the threat of cholera, typhoid and meningitis is great due to the lack of clean water and the destruction of the sewage system. The MECC is working with the Christian churches, the Red Crescent and the Ministry of Religious Affairs to coordinate weekly convoys of emergency supplies to meet the needs of civilians. The shipments include medical supplies, milk for children, candles, potable water and water purification tablets.

In cooperation with our partners, CWSW is airlifting relief supplies for Kurdish/Iraqi refugees in Iran. One 40-ton shipment included 14 tons of CWSW woolen blankets (9,500). The emergency supplies are distributed by the Iranian Red Crescent in cooperation with the MECC.

In Jordan, the MECC continues to assist the estimated 36,000 families who have fled Iraq and Kuwait. Palestinians within Kuwait have become particular targets of discrimination. CWSW has provided $322,500 to Jordan to support MECC programming. A shipment of 15,000 quilts and 15,000 woolen blankets went out in March.

There continues to be a need for medical care, food and feed for livestock in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as security restrictions continue to distrupt economic activities.

UCC participation, to date, in response to the humanitarian needs in the Middle East has totaled $40,000, made possible by One Great Hour of Sharing and Directed Gifts sent through the UCBWM.

To meet the special needs during this post-war time, CWSW has launched a special appeal called the OLIVE BRANCH. The Olive Branch campaign is seeking $1,000,000 for assistance in the Middle East. Genesis 8: 6-11 provides the symbolism for the appeal.

"At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made and sent out the raven; and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. Then he sent out the dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground . . . When the dove came back to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf, so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth."

The OLIVE BRANCH is a symbol of:

—life beginning again
—reconstruction after devastation
—a divinely bestowed second chance
—peace after the destruction of the earth
—food and sustenance sprouting anew in the desert
—the renewal of hope

During the horrors of the Gulf War and the continuing crisis in the Middle East, we have been a nation of symbols—the American flag, the yellow ribbon. As churches we are committed to responding with humanitarian assistance to the suffering people of the Middle East. Our symbol is the olive branch.

Wear a sprig of green and share the symbolism of the olive branch with others. Pray for lasting peace with justice in the Middle East.

The OLIVE BRANCH campaign seeks to unite Christians across the U.S. in response to the needs of people. You may contribute through your local church. Mark your gift for "Middle East Crisis."